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DUBLIN.
ESHER.
GUILDFORD.—Names may be sent *pro tem.* to Mrs. Clarke Kennedy, Ewhurst Rectory, near Guildford.
HUDDERSFIELD.
KIDDERMINSTER.—Names may be sent *pro tem.* to Miss Bennett, High School for Girls.
MANCHESTER.—Mrs. Freston, 6, St. Paul's Road, Kersal, Manchester, will receive names of people interested in this Branch *(pro tem.)*.
NORWICH.
NOTTINGHAM.
PRESTBURY.
SURBITON.
SWANSEA.
WINCHESTER.—Names may be sent *pro tem.* to Mrs. Rose, Lesney, Clifton Road, Winchester.
WOKING.

Readers of the *Parents' Review* living in these districts, or having friends there, are asked to communicate with Miss Russell, 26, Victoria Street, S.W.

DERBY.—On August 8th Mr. Arnold Bemrose, M.A., F.G.S., conducted a most successful geological excursion. The party, consisting of about 37 members and children, was conducted over the High Tor at Matlock, and the neighbourhood, the lecturer pointing out the various geological features in a most interesting manner. Tea was provided by the kindness of Mrs. Arnold Bemrose, at Parkfield, Starkholm, Matlock Bath.

HYDE PARK AND BAYSWATER.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Franklin, 50, Porchester Terrace, Hyde Park. "At Home" Thursday Mornings.—The following lectures, &c., have been arranged: Oct. 16th, at 3.30 p m., at 87, Gloucester Terrace, Hyde Park (by kind permission of Mrs. Mors), Mrs. Clement Parsons will lecture on "A Waverley Novel for a Child"; Mrs. Robert Devonshire in the chair. Tea and Coffee at 4.30. On Nov. 14th, at 4.30, at 49, Harley Street (by kind permission of Mrs. Battle), Dr. Hector Mackenzie (Physician to St. Thomas' Hospital and to the Brompton Hospital for Diseases of the Chest) will lecture on "The Importance of Fresh Air for the Health of Children." The chair will be taken by W. H. Battle, Esq., F.R.C.S. Tea and Coffee, 4 p.m. On Nov. 20th, at 3 p.m., at 13, Mansfield Street, Cavendish Square (by kind permission of Mrs. William Bridgeman, who will occupy the chair), Miss Helen Webb, M.B. (Lond.), will lecture on "The Hygiene of the Nursery." This lecture is intended for the nurses of members of any branch of the Union; members may also attend, but not non-members. Hockey for children and adults will commence in October. Particulars from Mrs. Franklin, as also of Swedish drill, dancing and handwork classes.

THE
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"Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life."

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ADDRESS TO THE EDUCATIONAL SCIENCE SECTION OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION MEETING AT GLASGOW, 1901.*

BY THE RIGHT HON. SIR JOHN E. GORST, F.R.S.,
President of the Section.

THE invitation of the British Association to preside over the Section of Education, established this year for the first time, has been given to me as a representative of that Government Department which controls the larger, but perhaps not the most efficient, part of the education of the United Kingdom. The most suitable subject for my opening Address would therefore seem to be the proper function of National Authority, whether central or local, in the education of the people: what is the limit of its obligations; what is the part of Education in which it can lead the way; what is the region in which more powerful influences are at work, and in which it must take care not to hinder their operation; and what are the dangers to real education inseparable from a general national system. I shall avoid questions of the division of functions between Central and Local Authorities, beset with

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*We have received an urgent request, to which Sir John Gorst has graciously conceded, that the above important paper should be published in the *Parents' Review* with a view to discussion.—ED.

so many bitter controversies, which are political rather than educational.

In the first place, so far as the mass of the youth of a country is concerned, the Public Instructor can only play a secondary part in the most important part of the education of the young—the development of character. The character of a people is by far its most important attribute. It has a great deal more moment in the affairs of the world, and is a much more vital factor in the promotion of national power and influence, and in the spread of Empire, than either physical or mental endowments. The character of each generation depends in the main upon the character of the generation which precedes it; of other causes in operation the effect is comparatively small. A generation may be a little better or a little worse than its forefathers, but it cannot materially differ from them. Improvement and degeneracy are alike slow. The chief causes which produce formation of character are met with in the homes of the people. They are of great variety and mostly too subtle to be controlled. Religious belief, ideas, ineradicable often in maturer life, imbibed from the early instruction of parents, the principles of morality current amongst brothers and sisters and playmates, popular superstitions, national and local prejudices, have a far deeper and more permanent effect upon character than the instruction given in schools or colleges. The teacher, it is true, exercises his influence among the rest. Men and women of all sorts, from university professors to village dames, have stamped some part of their own character upon a large proportion of their disciples. But this is a power that must grow feebler as the number of scholars is increased. In the enormous schools and classes in which the public instruction of the greater part of the children of the people is given the influence on character of the individual teacher is reduced to a minimum. The old village dame might teach her half-dozen children to be kind and brave and to speak the truth, even if she failed to teach them to read and write. The head master of a school of 2,000, or the teacher of a class of eighty, may be an incomparably better intellectual instructor, but it is impossible for him to exercise much individual influence over the great mass of his scholars.

There are, however, certain children for the formation of whose characters the nation is directly responsible—deserted children, destitute orphans, and children whose parents are criminals or paupers. It is the duty and interest of the nation to provide for the moral education of such children and to supply artificially the influences of individual care and love. The neglect of this obligation is as injurious to the public as to the children. Homes and schools are cheaper than prisons and workhouses. Such a practice as that of permitting dissolute pauper parents to remove their children from public control to spend the summer in vice and beggary at races and fairs, to be returned in the autumn, corrupt in body and mind, to spread disease and vice amongst other children of the State, would not be tolerated in a community intelligently alive to its own interest.

A profound, though indirect and untraceable, influence upon the moral education of a people is exercised by all national administration and legislation. Everything which tends to make the existing generation wiser, happier, or better has an indirect influence on the children. Better dwellings, unadulterated food, recreation grounds, temperance, sanitation, will all affect the character of the rising generation. Regulatons for public instruction also influence character. A military spirit may be evoked by the kind of physical instruction given. Brutality may be developed by the sort of punishments enjoined or permitted. But all such causes have a comparatively slight effect upon national character, which is in the main the product for good or evil of more powerful causes which operate, not in the school, but in the home.

For the physical and mental development of children it is now admitted to be the interest and duty of a nation in its collective capacity to see that proper schools are provided in which a certain minimum of primary instruction should be free and compulsory for all, and, further, secondary instruction should be available for those fitted to profit by it. But there are differences of opinion as to the age at which primary instruction should begin and end; as to the subjects it should embrace; as to the qualifications which should entitle to further secondary instruction; and as to how far this should be free or how far paid for by the scholar or his parents.

The age at which school attendance should begin and end is in most countries determined by economic, rather than educational, considerations. Somebody must take charge of infants in order that mothers may be at leisure to work; the demand for child labour empties schools for older children. In the United Kingdom minding babies of three years old and upwards has become a national function. But the infant "school," as it is called, should be conducted as a nursery, not as a place of learning. The chief employment of the children should be play. No strain should be put on either muscle or brain. They should be treated with patient kindness, not beaten with canes. It is in the school for older children, to which admission should not be until seven years of age, that the work of serious instruction should begin, and that at first for not more than two or three hours a day. There is no worse mistake than to attempt by too early pressure to cure the evil of too early emancipation from school. Beyond the mechanical accomplishments of reading, writing, and ciphering, essential to any intellectual progress in after life, and dry facts of history and grammar, by which alone they are too often supplemented, it is for the interest of the community that other subjects should be taught. Some effort should be made to develop such faculties of mind and body as are latent in the scholars. The same system is not applicable to all; the school teaching should fit in with the life and surroundings of the child. Variety, not uniformity, should be the rule. Unfortunately the various methods by which children's minds and bodies can be encouraged to grow and expand are still imperfectly understood by many of those who direct or impart public instruction. Examinations are still too often regarded as the best instrument for promoting mental progress; and a large proportion of the children in schools, both elementary and secondary, are not really educated at all—they are only prepared for examinations. The delicately expanding intellect is crammed with ill-understood and ill-digested facts, because it is the best way of preparing the scholar to undergo an Examination-test. Learning to be used for gaining marks is stored in the mind by a mechanical effort of memory, and is forgotten as soon as the class list is published. Intellectual faculties of much greater importance than knowledge, however extensive—as useful to the child whose schooling will cease at fourteen as to the child for whom elementary instruction is but the first step in the ladder of learning—are almost wholly neglected.

The power of research—the art of acquiring information for oneself—on which the most advanced science depends, may by a proper system be cultivated in the youngest scholar of the most elementary school. Curiosity and the desire to find out the reason of things is a natural, and to the ignorant an inconvenient, propensity of almost every child; and there lies before the instructor the whole realm of Nature knowledge in which this propensity can be cultivated. If children in village schools spent less of their early youth in learning mechanically to read, write, and cipher, and more in searching hedgerows and ditch-bottoms for flowers, insects, or other natural objects, their intelligence would be developed by active research, and they would better learn to read, write, and cipher in the end. The faculty of finding out things for oneself is one of the most valuable with which a child can be endowed. There is hardly a calling or business in life in which it is not better to know how to search out information than to possess it already stored. Everything, moreover, which is discovered sticks in the memory and becomes a more secure possession for life than facts lazily imbibed from books and lectures. The faculty of turning to practical uses knowledge possessed might be more cultivated in Primary Schools. It can to a limited extent, but to a limited extent only, be tested by examination. Essays, compositions, problems in mathematics and science, call forth the power of using acquired knowledge. Mere acquisition of knowledge does not necessarily confer the power to make use of it. In actual life a very scanty store of knowledge, coupled with the capacity to apply it adroitly, is of more value than boundless information which the possessor cannot turn to practical use. Some measures should be taken to cultivate taste in Primary Schools. Children are keen admirers. They can be early taught to look for and appreciate what is beautiful in drawing and painting, in poetry and music, in nature, and in life and character. The effect of such learning on manners has been observed from remote antiquity.

Physical exercises are a proper subject for Primary Schools, especially in the artificial life led by children in great cities:

both those which develop chests and limbs, atrophied by impure air and the want of healthy games, and those which discipline the hand and the eye—the latter to perceive and appreciate more of what is seen, the former to obey more readily and exactly the impulses of the will. Advantage should be taken of the fact that the children come daily under the observation of a quasi-public officer—the school teacher—to secure them protection, to which they are already entitled by law, against hunger, nakedness, dirt, over-work, and other kinds of cruelty and neglect. Children's ailments and diseases should by periodic inspection be detected: the milder ones, such as sores and chilblains, treated on the spot, the more serious removed to the care of parents or hospitals. Diseases of the eye and all maladies that would impair the capacity of a child to earn its living should in the interest of the community receive prompt attention and the most skilful treatment available. Special schools for children who are crippled, blind, deaf, feeble-minded, or otherwise afflicted should be provided at the public cost, from motives, not of mere philanthropy, but of enlightened self-interest. So far as they improve the capacity of such children they lighten the burden on the community.

I make no apology for having dwelt thus long upon the necessity of a sound system of Primary Instruction: that is the only foundation upon which a national system of advanced education can be built. Without it our efforts and our money will be thrown away. But while primary instruction should be provided for, and even enforced upon, all, advanced instruction is for the few. It is the interest of the commonwealth at large that every boy and girl showing capacities above the average should be caught and given the best opportunities for developing those capacities. It is not its interest to scatter broadcast a huge system of higher instruction for anyone who chooses to take advantage of it, however unfit to receive it. Such a course is a waste of public resources. The broadcast education is necessarily of an inferior character, as the expenditure which public opinion will at present sanction is only sufficient to provide education of a really high calibre for those whose ultimate attainments will repay the nation for its outlay on their instruction. It is essential that these few should not belong to one class or caste, but should be selected from the mass of the people, and be really the intellectual *élite* of the rising generation. It must, however, be confessed that the arrangements for selecting these choice scholars to whom it is remunerative for the community to give advanced instruction are most imperfect. No "capacity-catching machine" has been invented which does not perform its function most imperfectly: it lets go some it ought to keep, and it keeps some it ought to let go. Competitive examination, besides spoiling more or less the education of all the competitors, fails to pick out those capable of the greatest development. It is the smartest, who are also sometimes the shallowest, who succeed. "Whoever thinks in an examination," an eminent Cambridge tutor used to say, "is lost." Nor is position in class obtained by early progress in learning an infallible guide. The dunce of the school sometimes becomes the profound thinker of later life. Some of the most brilliant geniuses in art and science have only developed in manhood. They would never in their boyhood have gained a county scholarship in a competitive examination.

In Primary Schools, while minor varieties are admissible, those, for instance, between town and country, the public instruction provided is mainly of one type; but any useful scheme of higher education must embrace a great variety of methods and courses of instruction. There are roughly at the outset two main divisions of higher education—the one directed to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, of which the practical result cannot yet be foreseen, whereby the "scholar" and the votary of pure science is evolved; the other directed to the acquisition and application of special knowledge by which the craftsman, the designer, and the teacher are produced. The former of these is called Secondary, the latter Technical, Education. Both have numerous subdivisions which trend in special directions.

The varieties of secondary education in the former of these main divisions would have to be determined generally by considerations of age. There must be different courses of study for those whose education is to terminate at sixteen, at eighteen, and at twenty-two or twenty-three. Within each of these divisions, also, there would be at least two types of instruction, mainly according as the student devoted himself chiefly to literature and language, or to mathematics and science. But a general characteristic of all Secondary Schools is that their express aim is much more individual than that of the Primary School: it is to develop the potential capacity of each individual scholar to the highest point, rather than to give, as does the Elementary School, much the same modicum to all. For these reasons it is essential to have small classes, a highly educated staff, and methods of instruction very different from those of the Primary School. In the formation of character the old Secondary Schools of Great Britain have held their own with any in the world. In the rapid development of new Secondary Schools in our cities it is most desirable that this great tradition of British Public School life should be introduced and maintained. It is not unscientific to conclude that the special gift of colonising and administering dependencies, so characteristic of the people of the United Kingdom, is the result of that system of self-government to which every boy in our higher Public Schools is early initiated. But while we boast of the excellence of our higher schools on the character-forming side of their work, we must frankly admit that there is room for improvement on their intellectual side. Classics and mathematics have engrossed too large a share of attention; science, as part of a general liberal education, has been but recently admitted, and is still imperfectly estimated. Too little time is devoted to it as a school subject: its investigations and its results are misunderstood and undervalued. Tradition in most schools, nearly always literary, alters slowly, and the revolutionary methods of science find all the prejudices of antiquity arrayed against them. Even in scientific studies lack of time and the obligation to prepare scholars to pass examinations cause too much attention to be paid to theory, and too little to practice, though it is by the latter that the power of original research and of original application of acquired knowledge is best brought out. The acquisition of modern languages was in bygone generations almost entirely neglected. In many schools the time given to this subject is still inadequate, the method of teaching antiquated, the results unsatisfactory. But the absolute necessity of such knowledge in literature, in science, and in commerce is already producing a most salutary reform.

The variety of types of secondary instruction demanded by the various needs and prospects of scholars requires a corresponding variety in the provision of schools. This cannot be settled by a rule-of-three method, as is done in the case of primary instruction. We cannot say that such and such an area being of such a size and of such a population requires so many Secondary Schools of such a capacity. Account must be taken in every place of the respective demands for respective types and grades of secondary education; and existing provision must be considered.

It must not, however, be forgotten that a national system of education has its drawbacks as well as its advantages. The most fatal danger is the tendency of public instruction to suppress or absorb all other agencies, however long established, however excellent their work, and to substitute one uniform mechanical system, destructive alike to present life and future progress. In our country, where there are public schools of the highest repute carried on for the most part under ancient endowments, private schools of individuals and associations, and Universities entirely independent of the Government, there is reasonable hope that with proper care this peril may be escaped. But its existence should never be forgotten. Universal efficiency in all establishments that profess to educate any section of the people may properly be required; but the variety, the individuality, and the independence of schools of every sort, primary and secondary, higher and lower, should be jealously guarded. Such attributes once lost can never be restored.

There still remains for our consideration the second division of Higher Education, viz., the applied or technological side. It is in this branch of Education that Great Britain is most behind the rest of the world; and the nation in its efforts to make up the lost ground fails to recognise the fact that real technical instruction (of whatever type) cannot possibly be assimilated by a student unless a proper foundation has been laid previously by a thorough grounding of elementary and secondary instruction. Our efforts at reform are abrupt and disconnected. A panic from time to time sets in as to our backwardness in some particular branch of commerce or industry. There is a sudden rush to supply the need. Classes and schools spring up like mushrooms, which profess to give instruction in the lacking branch of applied science to scholars who have no elementary knowledge of the particular science, and whose general capacities have never been sufficiently developed. Students are invited to climb the higher rungs of the ladder of learning who have never trod the lower. But science cannot be taught to those who cannot read, nor commerce to those who cannot write. A few elementary lessons in shorthand and book-keeping will not fit the British people to compete with the commercial enterprise of Germany. Such sudden and random attempts to reform our system of technical education are time and money wasted. There are grades and types in technological instruction, and progress can only be slow. It is useless to accept in the higher branches a student who does not come with a solid foundation on which to build. In such institutions as the Polytechnics at Zurich and Charlottenburg we find the students exclusively drawn from those who have already completed the highest branches of general education; in this country there is hardly a single institution where this could be said of more than a mere fraction of its students. The middle grades of technological instruction suffer from a similar defect. Boys are entered at technical institutions whose only previous instruction has been at elementary schools and evening classes; whose intellectual faculties have not been developed to the requisite point; and who have to be retaught the elements to fit them for the higher instruction. In fact there is no scientific conception of what this kind of instruction is to accomplish, and of its proper and necessary basis of general education.

Yet this is just the division of Higher Education in which Public Authority finds a field for its operations practically unoccupied. There are no ancient institutions which there is risk of supplanting. The variety of the subject itself is such that there is little danger of sinking into a uniform and mechanical system. What is required is first a scientific, well-thought-out plan and then its prompt and effective execution. A proper provision of the various grades and types of technological instruction should be organised in every place. The aim of each institution should be clear; and the intellectual equipment essential for admission to each should be laid down and enforced. The principles of true economy, from the national point of view, must not be lost sight of. Provision can only be made (since it must be of the highest type to be of the slightest use) for those really qualified to profit by it to the point of benefiting the community. Evening classes with no standard for admission and no test of efficiency may be valuable from a social point of view as providing innocent occupation and amusement, but they are doing little to raise the technical capacity of the nation. So far from "developing a popular demand for higher instruction" they may be preventing its proper growth by perpetuating the popular misconception of what real technical instruction is, and of the sacrifices we must make if our people are to compete on equal terms with other nations in the commerce of the world. The progress made under such a system would at first be slow; the number of students would be few until improvements in our systems of primary and secondary instruction afforded more abundant material on which to work; but our foundation would be on a rock, and every addition we were able to make would be permanent, and contribute to the final completion of the edifice.

It is the special function of the British Association to inculcate "a scientific view of things" in every department of life. There is nothing in which scientific conception is at the present moment more urgently required than in National Education; and there is this peculiar difficulty in the problem, that any attempt to construct a national system inevitably arouses burning controversies, economical, religious, and political. It is only a society like this, with an established philosophical character, that can afford to reduce popular cries about education (which ignore what education really is, and perpetuate the absurdity that it consists in attending classes, passing examinations, and obtaining certificates) to their true proportions. If this Association could succeed in establishing in the minds of the people a scientific conception of a National Education System, such as has already been evolved by most of the nations of Europe, the States of America, and our own Colonies, it would have rendered a service of inestimable value to the British nation.